University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Curriculum Proposal Form #2

## Change in Degree, Major, or Submajor

**Effective Term:**

**Type of Action:**

**Degree:**

**Program Title:** Bachelor of Arts, College of Letters and Sciences

**GPA Requirement for the Major/Submajor:**

**Sponsor(s):** Liz Hachten

**Department(s):**

**College(s):**

# **Consultation took place**: NA Yes (list departments and attach consultation sheet)

Departments:

### 

**Proposal Information:**

([***Procedures for Form #2***](http://acadaff.uww.edu/UCC/Curriculum_Handbook_09/Procedures_form2.docx))

**Total number of credit units in program:**

Before change       After change

1. **Exact description of request:**

Currently, B.A. candidates in the College of Letters and Sciences are required to study a foreign language through the second semester at the college level or to complete two or more years of study of the same foreign language in high school. Under this proposal, students will no longer be able to satisfy this requirement with high school language study alone; instead, they will need to demonstrate that they have actually achieved proficiency equivalent to completing the second semester of college-level study by achieving an appropriate score on the placement examination. Students who graduated from high school before the revised requirement goes into effect in 2012 will be exempted and will continue to be held to the current requirement.

**From** (as listed in catalog and on AR)

**VI. COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCES BA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

**B. 1 YEAR OF A COLLEGE FOREIGN LANGUAGE OR EQUIVALENT (CHINESE, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH 142 OR ABOVE; JAPANESE 102 OR ABOVE) OR 2 YEARS OF THE SAME FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL.**

**To** (to be listed in catalog and on AR)

**VI. COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCES BA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

**B. COMPLETION OF 2nd SEMESTER OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (CHINESE, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH 142 OR ABOVE; JAPANESE 102 OR ABOVE) OR DEMONSTRATION OF EQUIVALENT PROFICIENCY BY APPROPRIATE SCORE ON PLACEMENT EXAMINATION.**

**EXCEPTION: STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE 2012 MAY SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT WITH 2 YEARS OF THE SAME FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL.**

1. **Relationship to mission and strategic plan of institution, and/or college and department goals and objectives:**

The Bachelor of Arts degree is one of the two degrees offered by the College of Letters and Sciences as part of its mission to provide “the essential elements of a liberal education”; currently, approximately 1200 UW-Whitewater students are pursuing this degree in a wide range of departments and majors. In addition, the B.A. degree in L&S is part of the core programs that UW-W offers to fulfill its mission to “provide a range of undergraduate programs and degrees . . . in letters, sciences, and the arts. . . .”

One of the Strategic Priorities of the College of Letters and Sciences is to “prepare our students to be global citizens.” The Bachelor of Arts degree requirement for foreign language study is one of the key pathways for students to achieve that goal and the impetus for strengthening that requirement grew out of the College’s strategic planning process. It is also very much in alignment with the LEAP essential learning outcomes that have been adopted by both the College and the University.

1. **Rationale:**

In discussions over the past several years, the L&S College Curriculum and International Education Committees have re-affirmed the importance of acquiring basic competency in a foreign language as part of the Bachelor of Arts degree program. Foreign language study fulfills a number of essential learning outcomes of a liberal arts education, including acquiring intercultural knowledge and competence, breadth of knowledge about human cultures, higher order thinking skills, and enhanced communication skills in both English and the target language. In this day and age, knowledge of a foreign language is a basic skill for life and work in a globalized society and a necessary for success in a wide range of professions. This proposal to strengthen the foreign language requirement emerged from those discussions as the most realistic option for assuring that all B.A. candidates have the opportunity to develop a basic proficiency level in at least one foreign language.

The current B.A. foreign language requirement, which allows students to use two years of high school foreign language study to fulfill a two semester college-level requirement, is ill-conceived on several levels. First of all, it is based on the assumption that there is a direct correspondence between high school and college course-work such that one year of high school study is equivalent to one semester of college study in a subject. There are no other proficiency requirements in the College (or at UW-Whitewater as a whole) that are structured this way – and for good reason, since assessment data indicate that this is a faulty assumption. The results from the foreign language placement tests (for Spanish, French, and German) that were administered to UW-Whitewater students over past five years show that 92% of students who completed 2 or 2.5 units of high school foreign language study placed into first or second semester college courses (see attached tables). Among students who completed 3 or 3.5 units of high school foreign language, 60% placed into first-year college classes. And 34% of students with 4 or 4.5 units still needed to take at least one semester of foreign language at the beginning level. If the College wishes to ensure that B.A. candidates have a meaningful level of foreign language competency, this can be achieved only through the results of proficiency or placement examination.

In addition, this revision will bring our B.A. foreign language requirement into closer alignment with our peer institutions among the UW System comprehensive universities. UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, UW-Oshkosh, and UW-Stevens Point all require B.A. candidates to complete 1-2 years of foreign language study or obtain a proficiency waiver based on examination scores. Only UW-Parkside allows students to waive out of college-level study based on high school coursework.

The old foreign language requirement will continue to apply to any student who graduated high school before 2012; this exemption was created in order to ensure that adult, non-traditional, and transfer students are not adversely affected by the demands of the new, strengthened foreign language requirement. This exemption will also ensure a relatively gradual transition phase that will assist with staffing needs. The College will work with the Admissions Office over the next few years to make sure that prospective students are informed of this impending change in a timely fashion.

1. **Cost Implications:**

This proposal will substantially increase demand for first and second semester foreign language classes. If the number of B.A. candidates and the pattern of placement exam scores continue at their current levels, approximately 3-4 additional sections of first semester language courses and 4-5 additional sections of second semester foreign language classes would need to be provided per year to meet demand. Since much of that additional demand will be for seats in Spanish classes, it is certain that staffing in that language will need to increase. Fortunately, the Department of Languages and Literatures received approval in Fall 2010 for a tenure-track position in Spanish, which will help to create more capacity in the lower-level Spanish courses. Nonetheless, additional academic staff and/or faculty will likely be needed over the next five years in Spanish and possibly in the other languages as well. The College can meet some of that demand from current resources or by shifting class assignments for existing staff but it is likely that some additional resources will be needed from central administration. In addition, the Foreign Language program will also need additional classroom and office space.

**UW-W FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEST RESULTS**

**2005-10**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FRENCH** | **FRENCH 141 Placement** | **FRENCH 142 Placement** | **FRENCH 251 Placement** | **FRENCH 252 Placement** | **FRENCH 321+ Placement** | **Total Tested** |
| **High School Units Completed** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5-6 Units** | 19% (7) | 14% (5) | 42% (15) | 14% (5) | 11% (4) | 36 |
| **4-4.5 Units** | 22% (12) | 42% (23) | 18% (10) | 16% (9) | 2% (1) | 55 |
| **3-3.5 Units** | 35% (11) | 35% (11) | 23% (7) | 6% (2) | 0 | 31 |
| **2-2.5 Units** | 63% (5) | 37% (3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **German** | **GERMAN 141 Placement** | **GERMAN 142 Placement** | **GERMAN 251 Placement** | **GERMAN 252 Placement** | **GERMAN 321+ Placement** | **Total Tested** |
| **High School Units Completed** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5-6 Units** | 5% (2) | 10 % (4) | 32% (13) | 20% (8) | 34% (14) | 41 |
| **4-4.5 Units** | 3% (1) | 16% (6) | 49% (18) | 5% (2) | 27% (10) | 37 |
| **3-3.5 Units** | 17% (4) | 26% (6) | 39% (9) | 17% (4) | 0 | 23 |
| **2-2.5 Units** | 66.7% (6) | 33% (3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Spanish** | **SPANISH 141 Placement** | **SPANISH 142 Placement** | **Spanish 251 Placement** | **SPANISH 252 Placement** | **SPANISH 321+ Placement** | **Total Tested** |
| **High School Units Completed** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5-6 Units** | 4% (9) | 12% (31) | 23% (59) | 27% (68) | 35% (89) | 256 |
| **4-4.5 Units** | 10% (38) | 21% (81) | 26% (100) | 22% (85) | 20% (79) | 383 |
| **3-3.5 Units** | 33% (50) | 29% (43) | 13% (20) | 17% (26) | 7% (11) | 150 |
| **2-2.5 Units** | 68% (54) | 23% (18) | 6% (5) | 1% (1) | 2% (2) | 80 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **All Languages Combined** | **Ist Semester Placement** | **2nd Semester Placement** | **3rd Semester Placement** | **4th Semester Placement** | **5th Semester+ Placement** | **Total Tested** |
| **High School Units Completed** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5-6 Units** | 5% (18) | 12% (40) | 26% (87) | 24%(81) | 32%(107) | 333 |
| **4-4.5 Units** | 13% (63) | 23% (110) | 27% (128) | 20% (96) | 19% (90) | 475 |
| **3-3.5 Units** | 32% (65) | 29% (60) | 18% (36) | 16% (32) | 5% (11) | 204 |
| **2-2.5 Units** | 67% (65) | 25% (24) | 5% (5) | 1% (1) | 2% (2) | 97 |